

## Death of a Member Prior to Retirement

### Preretirement Death Benefit

If a member dies prior to retirement, death benefits are calculated and paid to the beneficiary(ies) based on the member's age, service credit, employment status and eligibility for retirement. The preretirement death benefits the beneficiary(ies) or estate will receive are outlined in the chart below.

Member Age	Years of Service Credit	Preretirement Death Benefit
<i>Ineligible to Retire</i>		
Under 60* or Over 60*	Between 1 and 25  Between 1 and 10	Member contributions, total interest earned, plus an amount equal to the member's salary for the prior fiscal year (July 1 - June 30)
Any Age*	Less than 1 year, death was job-related	Member contributions, total interest earned, plus an amount equal to the member's salary at time of death
Any Age	Less than 1 year, death was not job-related	Member contributions, total interest earned, plus an amount matching the contributions and interest but limited to a maximum of \$5,000
<i>Eligible to Retire</i>		
Any Age* or Over 60*	25 or more  10 or more	<i>Choice of:</i> (1) Option 3 monthly benefit (50% of member's retirement benefit) to the spouse or beneficiary <i>or</i> (2) Member contributions, total interest earned, plus an amount equal to the member's salary for the prior fiscal year (July 1 - June 30)

*\* If death occurs more than 180 calendar days after the member's last day in pay status or if the deceased had applied for a refund of contributions or terminated employment, the lump-sum payment will be the same as for status of less than 1 year and not job-related.*

The designated beneficiary(s) will receive the death benefit after the [RSA-SB APPLICATION FOR SURVIVOR BENEFIT](#), and a certified death certificate have been submitted to the RSA. If there is no designated beneficiary, the death benefit will be paid to the member's estate.

### Term Life Insurance Benefits

The beneficiary(ies) or estate of a deceased full-time active member or a full-time member who dies within 90 days of being in active pay status is eligible to receive \$15,000 in life insurance benefits. For

members who are less than full-time, the benefit will be prorated. For example, if the member was half-time, the benefit paid would be \$7,500.

### **Change of Beneficiary**

When a new member joins the TRS, he or she designates a primary beneficiary(s) and contingent beneficiary(ies) on the [FORM 100 MEMBER INFORMATION RECORD](#). It is very important for the member to maintain a current beneficiary on record. If the member wishes to change the beneficiary designation, the change must be made on the [FORM 100-C CHANGE OF BENEFICIARY PRIOR TO RETIREMENT](#). If the member is designating more than one primary or contingent beneficiary, the change can be made on the back (page 2) of the CHANGE OF BENEFICIARY PRIOR TO RETIREMENT form.

If the primary beneficiary predeceases the member, the TRS will pay the contingent beneficiary the death benefit. If at the member's death, there is no beneficiary designated, the estate of the member will receive the appropriate death benefit.

To make beneficiary changes, **retired** members must contact the TRS for the proper form.

### **Reporting the Death of a Member**

The beneficiary or family of a deceased **active** member should contact the Payroll/Personnel Officer of his or her place of employment for information and the appropriate forms. The TRS may be contacted if there are any questions about benefits or identity of beneficiaries.

Upon the death of a retired member, the beneficiary or family should contact the TRS for information and the appropriate forms.

Prepared by the Communications staff of the Retirement Systems of Alabama. To have your questions answered in "Preparing for Retirement", please address them to **Michael Pegues, Communications, Retirement Systems of Alabama, P.O. Box 302150, Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2150**. Please visit our Web site at [www.rsa-al.gov](http://www.rsa-al.gov).